

## Appendices Economics Teacher Support Material

# Frequently asked questions

## General

How many areas of the syllabus have to be covered in the portfolio?

Each article in the portfolio must have a different section of the syllabus (microeconomics, macroeconomics, international economics and development economics) as its main focus. This means that the focus of the commentary will be on the area covered by the article, but it can draw on other areas of the syllabus too.

Does a newspaper and its website source count as the same source?

Yes.

How should students cite syndicated news articles?

Sometimes students use sources that are from a news agency, for example, Thomson Reuters or Associated Press, and these appear in another publication. Students must cite the final publication as the source, not the news agency. For example, a portfolio might have two articles from Thomson Reuters that were published in two different newspapers.

How important is it to meet the word limit requirements?

The word limit requirement is exact and each commentary must not exceed 750 words. See the section “Rubric requirements” for full details of what is included in the word limit. Moderators will not read beyond 750 words in a commentary and the portfolio will not be able to reach the highest level under criterion F: rubric requirements.

Is it appropriate to use the first person in the commentary?

There may be situations in which it is acceptable to use the first person. However, appropriate formal language is expected.

Can footnotes, endnotes and/or diagram labels be used to save words in the actual commentary?

No. If moderators consider that a student has used any of these methods to include information that should have been included in the commentary, that is, to avoid exceeding the word limit, that student will not be able to reach the highest level under criterion F: rubric requirements.

Is it essential that the commentaries are word processed?

It is not a requirement that the commentaries are word processed. However, tidy presentation and legibility are important qualities that are easier to achieve through word processing.

What will happen if students complete fewer than three commentaries?

See the sections “Assessing the commentaries and whole portfolio” and “Atypical work” in the “Responsibilities of the teacher” section.

What sort of information should students record for the commentaries?

Students are required to record various details on their commentary coversheet. An example of a “Commentary coversheet” is provided in the section “Forms” in this publication. See also “Internal assessment details—SL and HL” in the *Economics guide* (November 2010).

What information should the teacher provide at the start of the course?

See the section “Responsibilities of the teacher”.

How much feedback can the teacher give?

See the section “Responsibilities of the teacher”. It is important to note that once the student submits the final commentary, with the form 3/CS signed by the student, as their final version this must not be returned to the student for any alterations.

Can teachers be part of the selection process if a student writes more than three commentaries?

Teachers must not be part of the selection process if more than three commentaries are written. Students alone must decide which three commentaries to submit.

Whose responsibility is it to ensure that the work is that of the student?

This is both the student’s and the teacher’s responsibility. The use of an online plagiarism control, such as [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com) is highly recommended. Furthermore, both teacher and student are required to sign the coversheet 3/CS to confirm that to the best of their knowledge the work is the authentic work of the student. The teacher is also required to do the same on form 3/IA. If plagiarism is suspected the teacher must inform the Diploma Programme coordinator.

Should the portfolios contain any comments when they are submitted to the moderator?

Comments (if included) must be limited to the teacher marking information sheet. The individual commentaries must not be annotated.

What happens if a student does not meet the school’s internal deadline for each commentary without good reason?

This is a matter that the school must resolve itself, bearing in mind that the student may miss the external deadline.

What happens if a student does not meet the external deadline for the portfolio?

The procedure for a student missing deadlines is outlined in the *Handbook of procedures for the*

*Diploma Programme.* The teacher and Diploma Programme coordinator should check this prior to mark entry on IBIS.

## **Internal assessment criteria**

### **Criterion A: Diagrams (3 marks)**

Do diagrams have to be constructed using a computer?

No. These can be completed by hand, as can the whole commentary, although the use of a computer is recommended.

Can complete diagrams be cut and pasted into commentaries?

Yes. If a student chooses to include a diagram not drawn by the student, he or she must reference it clearly. However, generic diagrams not specifically adapted to the commentary may mean that the student cannot reach the higher levels of criterion A.

What is meant by “correctly labelled”?

Students should pay attention to axis labels. These should be labelled price of “something” and quantity of “something”. Labelling these “p” and “q” does not count. A graph title is recommended but not compulsory for full marks. If a complete title is provided for the graph—for example, “Market for bananas”—price and quantity alone are sufficient as it is clear what the market is for.

Should all diagrams be dynamic, showing shifts from one situation to another?

Dynamic diagrams that clearly illustrate the changes taking place (either by arrows or labelling) are effective. There are certain situations where a static diagram, without any changes, may be effective, but these are limited.

What is the difference between a “full” and a “limited” explanation?

A limited explanation is one that may not refer to dynamic changes in the article. A limited explanation may also indicate that the diagram has not been explained in adequate detail to make it relevant, for example, by making no reference to specific points on the diagram.

### **Criterion B: Terminology (2 marks)**

Should terms be defined?

As with responses in external examinations, the key terms should be defined. However, there is no need to define all economic terms within the commentary. This criterion is concerned with using the relevant terminology appropriately throughout the commentary, not definitions.

### **Criterion C: Application (2 marks)**

How does this differ from analysis?

Analysis of an economic problem can take place without the links to the article being effective. Application is how well the analysis links to the specific article. Questions that students should be asking themselves **must** focus on the relevance of their analysis to the actual article included.

Is it possible to get a level zero for “application” and a high level for “analysis”?

Yes, although this would be rare. These two criteria are designed to separate the two areas. “Application” refers uniquely to the links between the commentary and the article. When deciding which mark is the most appropriate for “application”, teachers should be trying to decide whether students have managed to choose appropriate concepts and theories relating to the article.

### **Criterion D: Analysis (3 marks)**

What is meant by “analysis”?

In the context of an internal assessment commentary, analysis means using **economics** to express economic understanding. Students must be able to address essential elements or the structure of a specific economic issue using economic theory.

### **Criterion E: Evaluation (4 marks)**

What is “evaluation”?

This is the highest order skill at AO3 and is one of the key differentiators between stronger and weaker students. Students are expected to synthesize their analysis of the argument, and then support this with reasoned arguments and justifications.

What are some examples of areas that could be included in “evaluation” of an article?

“Evaluation” implies a judgment of a theory and an application of the theory to a given situation, with awareness that the theory may not provide an accurate description.

Evaluation can take many forms.

- Students could identify the most important reasons or factors relating to an economic issue, and support this with reasoned arguments and justifications for their choice.
- When advantages and disadvantages are relevant, students could attempt to identify the most important advantage (or disadvantage) and then justify the reason for the choice.
- When strategies are presented, students could attempt to assess the short-term and long-term implications.
- When data is present, students may question its validity, in terms of whether it is appropriate, reliable or relevant.
- When considering a theory, students may question its validity, in terms of whether it is appropriate, reliable or relevant.

- Judgments about real-world effectiveness of policies could include limitations of non-economic constraints upon specific economic theory in reality.

**Criterion F: Rubric requirements (3 marks)**

What are the rubric requirements?

See “Criterion F: Rubric requirements” in the section “Internal assessment criteria—SL and HL in the *Economics guide* (November 2010)”. Students must meet all five requirements if they are to achieve full marks.